

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Kaibab National Forest

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Kaibab National Forest Managing Three Wildland Fire Use Fires

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – Three wildland fire use fires are burning on the Kaibab National Forest. One wildland fire use fire is burning on the North Kaibab Ranger District while the other two are burning on the Tusayan Ranger District. The North Kaibab Ranger District is north of Grand Canyon National Park while the Tusayan Ranger District is south of the park.

Wildland Fire Use Fires

A wildland fire use fire is a fire that is managed for resource benefits. Before a fire is put into wildland fire use status, land managers evaluate several criteria. For example, if a fire threatens life, property or resources, it is not considered appropriate for wildland fire use and is immediately suppressed. Once a fire is put into wildland fire use status, it is actively managed, meaning that fire managers establish boundaries and define weather and fuels conditions under which the fire will be allowed to burn. All wildland fire use fires must be naturally-ignited (lightning).

WFU Name: Warm Wildland Fire Use

Time/Date Started: June 8; was discovered by fire personnel

Location: North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest; The Warm Wildland Fire Use Fire is located about 3 miles south of Jacob Lake adjacent to state Highway 67. It is about 25 miles north of the Grand Canyon North Rim entrance.

Cause: Lightning (All WFUs must be naturally-ignited.)

Acreage Treated: 745 acres

Resources Committed: About 137 people including firefighters with specialized experience in managing wildland fire use fires.

Closures: Areas near the fire are closed to recreation. Check for signs.

NOTE: THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDLAND FIRE USE TEAM (HAHNENBERG) HAS TAKEN OVER MANAGEMENT OF THE WARM WILDLAND FIRE USE FIRE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE FIRE, PLEASE CALL 928-643-6804.

WFU Name: West Wildland Fire Use Fire

Time/Date Started: Ignited June 8; discovered afternoon of June 9

Location: Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest; The West Wildland Fire Use Fire started just north of Forest Road 302 about 1 mile west of Skinner Tank. It is about 8 miles southeast of Tusayan.

Cause: Lightning (All WFUs must be naturally-ignited.)

Fuels: Ponderosa pine forest with scattered oak and brush

Acreage Treated: 1,925 acres

Resources Committed: 4 engines, 1 dozer, miscellaneous firefighting personnel. Total personnel = about 20

Resource Benefits: Reduction of heavy accumulations of fuel on the forest floor; restoration of fire to the ecosystem; recycling of nutrients into the soil; improvement of wildlife habitat

Closures: No road/trail closures are in effect. Forest Road 302 remains open. However, hazards could be present, and motorists should use extra caution. East Rim Drive in Grand Canyon National Park could receive some smoke.

Summary: Smoke production was minimal on the West Wildland Fire Use Fire yesterday due to minimal growth. There were no impacts to Grand Canyon Village, Tusayan or the Grand Canyon Airport. The fire use fire burned at a very low intensity yesterday. The fire use fire's western and northern edges remain secure. Fire managers do not expect the fire use fire to grow in those directions. The fire use fire is continuing to grow slowly to the east and south. As it moves into areas previously treated with prescribed fires and wildland fire use fires, it will continue to slow and produce less smoke. Today, firefighters will continue monitoring the West Wildland Fire Use Fire. The West Wildland Fire Use Fire is demonstrating how fire behaves when it is allowed to actively function as an ecological process. While most of the fire has remained on the ground and has treated the landscape at a low-to-moderate intensity, there are some areas that have burned at a higher intensity. To fire managers, all of these effects have their place as part of fire's natural ecological role.

WFU Name: Bar Wildland Fire Use

Time/Date Started: Ignited June 9; discovered June 10

Location: Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest; The Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire is located about 3 miles west of the junction of state Highway 64 and Forest Road 307 in the Upper Basin area. It is about 16 miles southeast of Tusayan.

Cause: Lightning (All WFUs must be naturally-ignited.)

Fuels: Pinyon/juniper woodland, sagebrush and grass

Acreage Treated: 175 acres (The Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire grew only a few acres yesterday.)

Resources Committed: 1 engine, miscellaneous firefighting personnel. Total personnel = about 10

Resource Benefits: Reduction of heavy accumulations of fuel on the forest floor; restoration of fire to the ecosystem; recycling of nutrients into the soil; improvement of wildlife habitat

Closures: No road/trail closures are in effect.

Summary: The Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire produced minimal amounts of smoke yesterday due to minimal growth. There were no impacts to Tusayan or Grand Canyon Village. In general, the Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire has grown in short spurts of active fire behavior on very warm, very dry, windy days. When it grows, it typically moves to the east/northeast. The fire use fire's northern boundary is secure, which means that fire managers don't expect it to continue growing in that direction. The northern boundary is Forest Road 2815. The fire use fire is just south of 77 Bar Tank. Today, fire managers will continue monitoring the Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire. They have been pleased with its effects. In the area where the fire use fire is burning, there are a lot of bug-killed pinyon trees, and there is a substantial amount of dead material on the forest floor. Fire will help to reduce the dead and down fuels while making way for the growth of grasses and forbs. Fire managers hope the treatment with fire will help to improve wildlife habitat in the area. The Bar Wildland Fire Use Fire is also creating a mosaic across the landscape, with areas burned at varying levels of intensity including areas not burned at all and areas burned at a high level of intensity.

For more information, please call Jackie Denk at 928-635-5607.